

INTRODUCTION

As urban areas became more crowded in the decades following World War II, more people began to move toward the serenity of open space. At first the movement wasn't far from the urban areas, but as time passed and our society became more mobile, people moved far and wide and are now very prevalent in the wildland setting. Northern Idaho has experienced this phenomenon first hand. The result of this trend is an increase in the risk of loss of life and property, while at the same time complicating fire suppression efforts.

The condition where human habitations are intermingled with a natural setting is referred to as the "wildland urban interface". The definition of "wildland urban interface" used in preparation of this plan can be found in Appendix A.

Federal, state and local fire agencies have done an excellent job of fire suppression and fire prevention education, but there was never a consolidated attempt to reduce the risk of loss of life or property to wildfires. This all changed in the year 2000. Through efforts of the western governors and legislators a National Fire Plan was adopted and an agreement on a ten-year comprehensive strategy to address the impacts of wildfire on the landscape and communities was put in place. The National Fire Plan emphasizes a collaborative, community-based approach to wildland fire issues. Part of this process is to assess the risk to communities from wildfire and develop a wildland urban interface fire mitigation plan.

In Idaho's implementation strategy for the National Fire Plan each county is asked to develop a wildland urban interface fire mitigation plan for non-federal lands. The mitigation plan is to include a risk assessment and a mitigation strategy to address risk associated with wildfire in the county. Bonner County elected to contract this work out, and has hired Inland Forest Management Inc., of Sandpoint, Idaho to do the risk assessment, write the wildland urban interface fire mitigation plan and provide management for the mitigation program. The name of the mitigation program in Bonner County is **BONFIRE**.

The risk assessment described in this plan will be used to prioritize wildfire mitigation efforts. The mitigation strategy includes hazardous fuels treatment projects, public education and wildland fire preparedness. Implementation of the mitigation strategy will begin in the spring of 2004.

The plan is organized to first give an overview of the general setting in Bonner County, including a brief look at local fire history. A Risk Assessment is then presented, followed by the Mitigation and Action Plan that outlines mitigation measures designed to reduce the risk of wildfire in the wildland urban interface.